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Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-fifth session on the evaluation of the programme on environment

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (i) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the attached report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-fifth session on the evaluation of the programme on environment, dated 31 March 1998. The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments, programmes and agencies. The Secretary-General takes note of the findings in the report and concurs with its recommendations.

2. The report will provide valuable input into the report of the Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements, which I have requested in order to assist me in the preparation of proposals for submission to the General Assembly on reforming and strengthening United Nations activities in the environmental and human settlements areas.

* E/AC.51/1998/1.

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Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-fifth session on the evaluation of the programme on environment

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on an in-depth evaluation.

The United Nations Environment Programme has made an effort to follow through on the recommendations of the Committees. Progress is uneven and, in particular, the Programme needs to give more attention to (a) utilizing existing expertise within the United Nations system, (b) providing support to the implementation of environmental conventions and © improving access to information for the non-scientific community, including decision makers and the media. Recommendations are made to address this situation.

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-fifth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations programme on environment (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1). The Committee, being in general agreement with the main thrust of the report, which was to refocus the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) by strengthening its partnership with other organizations within and outside the United Nations system, with due regard to its role as a global environment programme, endorsed the recommendations contained in the report.[1]

2. At its eighteenth session, the Governing Council of UNEP, in its decision 18/5 of 26 May 1995,[2] welcomed the evaluation report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as well as the conclusions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in its report on the matter, and requested the Executive Director of UNEP to consider and take appropriate action on the recommendations in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, taking due consideration of the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee. In 1997, UNEP reported to the Governing Council on the implementation of the recommendations (UNEP/GC.19/INF.3).

3. At the end of 1996, the Office of Internal Oversight Services conducted a review of UNEP and the administrative practices of its secretariat, as envisaged in recommendation 23 of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1). In 1997, the report of the Office on that review (A/51/810) was considered by the Governing Council of UNEP and by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (see para. 33 below).

4. The present triennial review, conducted by the Central Evaluation Unit of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to determine the extent to which the Committee's recommendations had been implemented, is based, as was the case with past triennial reviews, on a review of the relevant documentation, information submitted by UNEP and other concerned organizations and consultations by the Central Evaluation Unit for clarification and verification purposes.

II. Findings

A. Focusing the role of the United Nations Environment Programme

5. UNEP was established, in 1972 to serve as the focal point for environmental action and coordination within the United Nations system. The Environment Fund, under the responsibility of UNEP, was created to assist UNEP in playing a catalytic role by providing for additional financing for environment programmes. Since then, many organizations, within and outside the United Nations system, have developed international environment programmes. In particular, as a result of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, new actors in the field of environment and sustainable development have multiplied and, increasingly, participated in United Nations deliberations, negotiations and actions. Furthermore, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General of 14 July 1997, (A/51/950, para. 173), in the United Nations, the Commission on Sustainable Development has become an important policy forum and the number of international environmental conventions with autonomous governing bodies and secretariats has been growing.

6. In the follow-up to the Conference, UNEP initiated a lengthy process of redefining its role as coordinator and catalyst and focusing its action on the environmental dimension of sustainable development. However, a broadly accepted understanding of the post-Conference role of UNEP was slow to emerge. This lack of clarity – in addition to other factors such as doubts about the quality of UNEP management – played a role in the fact that contributions to the Environment Fund fell short of the $100 million yearly target established, in 1989, by the Governing Council of UNEP, and, after a peak in 1993, declined from $66.8 million to $47.7 million in 1996 (see para. 31 below).

7. In 1997, to revitalize UNEP, the Governing Council adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme.[3] Taking into account the catalytic role of UNEP, and in conformity with Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,[4] the General Assembly, in its resolution S/19-2 of 28 June 1997, annex, paragraph 123, endorsed the Declaration regarding the role of UNEP, which "is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global

environment".In early 1997, the Office of Internal Oversight Services recommended that UNEP translate a "clarified role and function into a clear plan of action for the next five years. The plan should contain measurable, or at least observable, goals and basic indicators of progress applicable to each programme and operational unit" (A/51/810, para. 138).

> *Recommendation 1, Catalytic role of UNEP in emerging environmental issues.* UNEP should, in its catalytic role in emerging environmental issues, draw to a greater extent on the contributions of the United Nations system and of the international scientific and other professional communities, to ensure that problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments, through the Governing Council and other bodies (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

8. During the period under review, 1995-1997, UNEP concluded several partnership and collaboration agreements with United Nations agencies as well as with other organizations and communities. Long-standing collaboration with agencies continued in a few areas; for example, the collaboration of UNEP with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in relation to the safe use of pesticides and the conservation of genetic resources was maintained; their joint operation of the voluntary prior informed consent (PIC) procedure in the area of international trade of chemicals led to the development of a legally binding instrument. However, there are several indications that, in its catalytic role, UNEP did not draw on the contributions of the United Nations system as much as it could have. For example, regarding environmental assessment, the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS) represented the collective effort of the United Nations system to monitor and assess the global environment; it was supported by the GEMS Programme Activity Centre (see E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1, para. 19). In its comments on an earlier draft of the present report, UNEP stated that the function of GEMS, as it was originally envisaged by UNEP, is essentially being taken over by the global observing systems, which are currently under development. It should be noted that, in 1997, the Governing Council of UNEP, in its decision 19/3 of 7 February 1997,[5] expressed its appreciation for the UNEP report on the state of the world environment, Global Environment Outlook-1, and, in its decision 19/4 of 7 February 1997,[5] in relation to GEMS, requested the Executive Director to improve the use of the GEMS/Air and GEMS/Water programmes and the Global Resource Information Database in the preparation of the Global Environment Outlook assessments. In another programme area, chemical safety, UNEP plays a central role in the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development as task manager at the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development on the sound management of toxic chemicals. UNEP co-founded the International Programme on Chemical Safety with the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization in 1980; following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the mandates of the International Programme on Chemical Safety were strengthened and expanded. The two main roles of the International Programme are to establish the scientific basis for the safe use of chemicals by means of health and environmental risk assessment and to strengthen national capabilities in chemical safety. Since 1996, UNEP has ceased making contributions to the International Programme. In its comments on an earlier draft of the present report, UNEP explained that a new coordinative mechanism, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, represented the best approach to achieve the concept of an expanded International Programme on Chemical Safety, as agreed by Governments and intergovernmental organizations alike.

> *Recommendation 2, UNEP coordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1):*
>
> (a) UNEP should coordinate, under the guidance of the Governing Council, environmental programmes within the United Nations system in partnership with the relevant units in agencies and programmes in a manner conducive to other institutions assuming greater operational and financial responsibility;

9. UNEP considers that, during the period 1995-1997, a lack of resources in many agencies led to the reduction of collaborative efforts in some areas. Agencies commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that UNEP did not play a major role in coordinating programmes in partnership with them so that they could assume greater responsibility. Agencies valued the role of UNEP when it catalysed the development of environmental components within their regular programme of activities. One agency, which had been effective in taking new initiatives and assuming greater financial responsibility, noted, in early 1998, that the level of UNEP funding in support of agency initiatives had declined by more than 80 per cent since 1990, and that UNEP had been unresponsive to periodic inquiries directed towards rebuilding collaboration. The decrease in contributions to the Environment Fund and the trend, at UNEP, to utilize almost all Fund resources to support

internal projects, made the issue of defining the catalytic role that UNEP can play more pressing.

> (b) Coordination at the programmatic level within UNEP should be the responsibility of individual programme managers for each area of Agenda 21; they should maintain a continuous dialogue with their counterparts in the United Nations system, keeping the state of the environment and the effectiveness of United Nations environmental programmes under review; mechanisms for influencing other organizations at the programme level, such as the Earthwatch secretariat and the UNEP/Department of Humanitarian Affairs joint unit on environmental emergencies, should be utilized more systematically;

10. UNEP stressed that its programme managers are fully in charge of their programmes and that its programme of work is developed in consultation with other international organizations. During the period 1995-1997, UNEP proceeded with building further programme coordination mechanisms. But, in doing so, UNEP appeared primarily concerned with the internal integration of its activities; it is unclear how much attention was paid to the real purpose of recommendation 2 (b), which was to strengthen coordination throughout the United Nations system. There were a few examples of close collaboration with agencies, but in most cases the continuous dialogue at the level envisaged by the recommendation was not established; such dialogue could, at least, have prevented UNEP from planning activities already integrated in the programme of work of other organizations.

> (c) Coordination of environmental programmes at the policy level should be carried out under the arrangements made to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; the necessary additional consultations with organizations within or outside the United Nations system should be carried out on an ad hoc basis.

11. Until 1992, environmental programmes were coordinated at the policy level, under the chairmanship of the Executive Director of UNEP, by the Designated Officials for Environmental Matters, who submitted a report on programme implementation to the Governing Council. Since 1993, in the context of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development has coordinated the implementation by the United Nations system of recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; various organizations were designated task managers to provide leadership in specific programme areas. In its decision 18/14 of 26 May 1995,[6] the Governing Council welcomed the establishment of the Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group, a successor arrangement to the Designated Officials for Environmental Matters, as a flexible consultative and advisory body, meeting as and when required, to enable UNEP to discharge its coordination mandate effectively, and stressed that full account should be taken of the role, responsibilities and work of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development. In 1995, several agencies were uncertain about the value the Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group could add to the existing ACC coordinating machinery. In early 1998, one major partner of UNEP commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that many mechanisms, both formal – such as the Inter-Agency Committee for Sustainable Development, ACC subcommittees, Earthwatch and the Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group – and informal, exist to coordinate United Nations activities relating to environment, and that it is difficult for agencies to allocate funds to attend meetings that deal only with coordination and do not address specific technical subjects as well.

> *Recommendation 3, Programmed UNEP activities.* The Executive Director should, within her authority to adjust the apportionments for each budget line by 20 per cent, redeploy resources for the Environment Fund programme during each biennium to address emerging issues for which no other institution has established mandates, recognized expertise or delivery capacity. The resources for the reallocations should be redeployed from those activities where other institutions have developed expertise and capacity to deliver or additional funding from other sources besides the Environment Fund have been secured. The reallocation should be done in consultation with the institutions concerned (E/AC.5/1995/3 and Corr.1).

12. UNEP stated that, during the period, the allocation of resources to the various priority areas ensured that emerging issues were recognized but that the scope for redeployment of resources had been significantly reduced by the severe financial constraints (UNEP/GC.19/INF.3, para. 6). UNEP played a significant role in new initiatives such as the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, adopted in 1995. The long-established units of UNEP, such as the oceans and coastal areas programme, could address important aspects of this Programme; however, UNEP action was insufficient in more recent areas of concern, such as freshwater. Strengthening UNEP action, as in the case of freshwater, would not necessarily have required building strong in-house

capacity but more effective use of existing mechanisms, such as the inter-agency GEMS/Water programme and the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, and allocating funds from the Environment Fund to other organizations in the form of seed money or cost-sharing arrangements.

B. Priority areas for action

1. Environmental assessment

Recommendation 4, Credible scientific assessments. In its convenor capacity, UNEP should promote credible scientific assessments through independent expert groups; programmes agreed upon as a result of these assessments should receive governmental guidance and support as in the case of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

13. UNEP implemented recommendation 4 through its networks of collaborating institutions promoting credible scientific assessment; UNEP also convened various expert groups to assist the Programme with assessments in a wide range of issues. Several global assessment reports were well received by the Governing Council and the scientific community; the Governing Council requested that the consultative process with Governments be improved in the preparation of such reports as the Global Environment Outlook report. Credible scientific assessments could also be carried out more systematically through inter-agency United Nations programmes such as the World Climate Programme and particularly its World Climate Impact Assessment and Response Strategies Programme, the Climate Agenda, the International Programme on Chemical Safety, the Global Ocean Observing System, the Global Climate Observing System and the recently established Global Terrestrial Observing System, once it becomes fully operational.

Recommendation 5, Coordination of environmental assessment within UNEP. The coordinator of the UNEP environmental assessment subprogramme should also coordinate activities related to assessment throughout UNEP and make recommendations on joint programming of assessment activities for the consideration of the Executive Director (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

14. In 1995, UNEP established the Division of Environmental Information and Assessment to coordinate all major assessments in the programme of work for the biennium 1996-1997. At the end of 1996, UNEP stated that available resources only enabled the Division to coordinate some of those assessments (UNEP/GC.19/INF.3, para. 8). However, the Office of Internal Oversight Services found it difficult to accept that those difficulties could be attributed to a lack of resources. In early 1997, the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services observed that a rather large number of posts at the D-2 level covered management and coordination functions (A/51/810, para. 39), and that several coordinating and management committees had been established, to a point of redundance, and that "the system does not appear to be particularly efficient or effective" (ibid., para. 64).

Recommendation 6, Discontinuation of superseded UNEP assessment services. Specialized databases and services currently established within UNEP which have been superseded by services offered in other institutions, such as some services within the International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals, should be discontinued; in such cases, UNEP should redirect queries and provide any other minimal assistance needed (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

15. UNEP is still in the process of identifying which of its specialized databases and services have been superseded by services offered in other institutions. The Global Environment Outlook programme is involved in identifying the core global data sets that are needed for global environment reporting.

Recommendation 7, Access to scientific data. UNEP should promote through Earthwatch a global policy of enhanced availability, within the framework of United Nations mandated programmes, of existing environmental data at the national or international levels so as to facilitate the delivery of environmental management tools intended for country decision makers (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

16. Earthwatch – a coordinating mechanism through which organizations of the United Nations system, in collaboration with Governments and scientists, gather data as the basis for comprehensive assessments of environment issues – was not used by UNEP as the central mechanism to facilitate the delivery of environmental management tools intended for country decision makers. Instead, in implementing recommendation 7, UNEP relied mostly on its own more narrowly based networks of regional assessment collaborating centres, and on its Environment and Natural Resource Information Networks (ENRIN). ENRIN is to establish and service strategic networks for assessment policy consultations and to provide access to data for current

and future regional and global assessments and reports. The ENRIN programme, in particular its capacity-building components, is implemented with seed funding from UNEP.

> *Recommendation 8, National capacities for state of the environment information.* UNEP should promote through Earthwatch enhancement of national capacities to collect state of the environment information and to use it at the national level for decision-making; such plans should include public participation in data-collection efforts and should ensure scientific validity and proper control (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

17. In collaboration with other organizations, UNEP published a *State of the Environment* source book intended to assist Governments in their state of the environment reporting, and initiated activities to assist developing countries in building state of the environment assessment capacities. The endeavour is seen as part of a long-term programme.

> *Recommendation 9, A common set of indicators.* In support of the work of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development Task Manager for Development Watch, UNEP should ensure that Earthwatch assists countries in developing and adopting a common set of indicators for sustainable development to be used in policy-making and environmental management at the national and international levels; a practical initial set of aggregated indicators that Governments can use in their reporting should be ready for the 1997 overview of Agenda 21 by the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

18. UNEP implemented this recommendation in cooperation with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (now part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs). The time-frame envisaged in recommendation 9 could not be adhered to; in 1997, testing of a set of indicators was initiated in a number of pilot countries. Earthwatch was not actively engaged in implementing the recommendation.

2. Environmental management

> *Recommendation 10, Facilitating the coordination of international environmental agreements.* UNEP should facilitate, within its mandate, the coordinating functions arising from the increasing number of international legal agreements on the environment with the relevant international organizations in the following areas: (a) development of international law; (b) enforcement of treaties; and (c) formulation and implementation of national legislation. It should do so by convening meetings, providing support services and exchanging information between the organizations and intergovernmental bodies involved. The goal of such UNEP activity should be to facilitate common planning and avoid duplication, taking into account the work and recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

19. UNEP carried out a number of activities relevant to recommendation 10. Several expert meetings were organized on issues such as the relation of environmental law and sustainable development, and liability and compensation for environmental damage. Assistance was provided to requesting countries for the development of national environmental legislation. Regarding the conventions, since 1995, coordination meetings of environmental convention secretariats were held twice a year; participation in the meetings was expanded to include convention secretariats not administered by UNEP and other international organizations. Nevertheless, in early 1997, the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services noted that the organizational structure of UNEP did not reflect the linkages between its activities and those of the conventions; the conventions were not seen as "a strategic tool through which UNEP could endeavour to influence the global environmental agenda" (A/51/810, para. 27). In 1997, the General Assembly, at its nineteenth special session, stressed that at the international and national levels there is a need for, *inter alia*, better scientific assessment of ecological linkages between the conventions; identification of programmes that have multiple benefits; and enhanced public awareness-raising with respect to the conventions. Such tasks should be undertaken by UNEP (resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 119).

> *Recommendation 11, A comprehensive database on national and international environmental law.* The mandated development of a comprehensive database on national and international environmental law, and of related user services, should be implemented without duplicating services already well developed in other organizations. The partnership between UNEP and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – World Conservation Union (IUCN) Environmental Law Centre should be strengthened, the IUCN database should be used as the core archival system for environmental law and UNEP should provide IUCN with the necessary support to enable adequate

maintenance and further development, in particular to satisfy UNEP requirements. UNEP should concentrate its resources on developing services to users and partners (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

20. In 1996, UNEP and IUCN agreed to integrate the environmental law information held by the two organizations. It is expected that work on a joint project to establish a global data bank, including the development of a common core archival system, and a pilot joint legal information service, will be completed by the end of 1998. It is only at that time that benefits to users can be reviewed.

Recommendation 12, Support services to convention secretariats. UNEP should provide adequate support services to those convention secretariats it administers. UNEP could assist in obtaining additional funding for secretariats to implement national projects where their expertise is required. In carrying out its responsibility as administrator of convention secretariats, UNEP should ensure that, for example, work programmes are implemented and that this is done in an economical manner in conformity with decisions of the parties. To carry out these tasks, UNEP should establish a support unit with the required administrative and substantive capacity; this unit should also liaise with other secretariats of international environmental agreements to advance the implementation of Agenda 21 mandates regarding environmental law and to avoid duplication of support services (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

21. UNEP continued to provide administrative support to the environmental convention secretariats it administers, as well as limited substantive support for conventions, through the UNEP Programme Support Unit and the Information Unit, both located at Geneva, and the secondment of one senior officer to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, located in Montreal. However, overall, the support provided did not significantly improve the administration of the secretariats. The Governing Council, in its decision 19/9 C of 7 February 1997, encouraged the Executive Director and the secretariat of each convention for which UNEP is responsible to enter into an arrangement that clarifies their respective roles and responsibilities and defines the procedures through which the Executive Director exercises control or supervision, with a view to improving efficiency and effectiveness. The General Assembly, at its nineteenth special session, stressed that institutional arrangements for the convention secretariats should provide effective support and efficient services, while ensuring the appropriate autonomy (resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 119). By the end of 1997, UNEP had reviewed the administrative aspects of the arrangement, as requested in Council decision 19/9 C. Ways to increase collaboration in areas such as fund-raising or users' access to information were not reviewed.

Recommendation 13, Resources for environmental law and institutions. The share of resources allocated to the environmental law and institutions subprogramme should be restored to the 1992-1993 level. A task force representing different sectors of UNEP should be established to design a programme that coordinates and utilizes all work and related resources on environmental law and institutions within UNEP (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

22. The share of Environment Fund resources allocated to the environmental law and institutions subprogramme was reduced by Governing Council decision from 8.5 per cent for the biennium 1992-1993 to 4 per cent for the bienniums 1994-1995 and 1996-1997. In 1997, the Council decided to allocate 5.5 per cent of Fund resources to the subprogramme for the biennium 1998-1999. During the period 1995-1997, UNEP was able to raise additional funds in support of specific environmental law activities, such as the environmental law and institutions in Africa capacity-building project; however, it sometimes took several years to fund projects such as the UNEP/IUCN joint legal data bank mentioned in paragraph 20 above. Although the task force envisaged in recommendation 13 was not formed and no explicit programme exists, there appear to be improvements in the coordination of environmental law activities within UNEP; subsequent to the recommendation, the task of coordination was assigned to the Assistant Executive Director, who supervises the work of a number of UNEP substantive units and of its environmental law programmes.

3. Support measures

Recommendation 14, Capacity-building. Regarding capacity-building, UNEP should focus on (a) providing information services to other organizations and to Governments for use in strategic planning for sustainable development; and (b) providing technical guidance and policy advice for the development of national environmental law and institutions (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

23. Several initiatives were taken by UNEP to support capacity-building in the two areas identified in the recommendation, such as the capacity-building activities of the ENRIN programme mentioned in paragraph 16 above. Regarding the role of UNEP in capacity-building, the

Nairobi Declaration (see para. 7 above) limited UNEP responsibility to the provision of policy and advisory services in key areas of institution-building. UNEP thus has a new mandate on the basis of which it can implement recommendation 14.

> *Recommendation 15, Needs assessment for capacity-building.* The primary source of assessment of needs should be the UNDP resident representatives, acting in their capacity as UNEP representatives at the country level. Where required, UNEP regional offices should be the link between UNDP resident representatives and UNEP central programmes. UNEP should supply UNDP resident representatives and country representatives of organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations specialized agencies supporting the development and implementation of national plans, with regular information on what UNEP activities could be organized and services provided (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

24. In 1995, a UNEP/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Framework Agreement for cooperation in capacity-building was finalized, whereby UNDP resident representatives act as UNEP representatives at the country level and are the primary source of the assessment of needs. UNEP and UNDP have been working as close partners in capacity-building projects to develop environmental law and related human resources in various countries in Africa and Asia. It should be recalled that most United Nations specialized agencies carry out needs assessments in the field, in their areas of competence; the UNEP/UNDP Framework Agreement does not, but should, assign the central role to the Resident Coordinator function, not the Resident Representative.

> *Recommendation 16, UNEP role in environmental training.* UNEP should not develop its own training capacity, but should promote collaboration among a core group of international organizations that have the capacity to organize specialized training programmes. UNEP should provide assistance to those organizations and, in particular, staff support in specialized areas at the request of the implementing organization. UNEP should promote necessary follow-up activities six months to a year after the training, or at some other appropriate interval, and draw lessons from this experience (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

25. UNEP did not define a strategy to promote collaboration among a core group of international organizations so that it would not need to involve itself in training activities. UNEP continued to organize training activities and to support mechanisms such as regional environmental training networks to disseminate information on training opportunities. However, gaps and duplications, even within the United Nations system, were not systematically identified. Regarding the results of training, participants' feedback was obtained mostly on the last day of training events, with insufficient longer-term assessment of actual use. Overall, UNEP action to identify training priority needs, to provide an inventory of existing training resources and to assess the long-term results of the training programmes conducted needs to be further developed.

> *Recommendation 17, Strategy for environment information.* Apart from national Governments, the major groups to whose needs for environment information UNEP should be responding are those specified in chapters 23 to 32 of Agenda 21. Decisions to continue existing or produce new information material should be based on (a) a demand-driven process, (b) the assessment that no other organization is better placed to produce and distribute the material, and (c) use of the most cost-effective medium, decided on a case-by-case basis and taking into account the capacity of redisseminators. This strategy should be implemented in close collaboration with the regional offices. UNEP should monitor systematically through its regional offices and focal points whether or not the information material it produces or sponsors is reaching the intended target group, and how effective it is. Based on the results of this monitoring, the present range and number of information activities should be reduced by terminating the least effective activities (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

26. UNEP attempted to monitor whether information reaches target groups and how effective this information is through its regional offices and government focal points. Evaluations and surveys carried out from headquarters were also used for the same purpose; however, UNEP considers that implementation was hampered by its reduced Fund resources for 1996-1997. More use is made of the existing network of UNEP national committees, which proved to be efficient partners in redisseminating UNEP information materials to Governments, non-governmental organizations, major groups and the general public. As a result, a number of less effective activities have been discontinued, including the support to the information media of the non-governmental organizations and the services of regional

youth advisers. In conformity with the recommendation, greater emphasis is now being placed on repackaging existing information materials produced by the Programme in response to specific demands. The publication programme has yet to be streamlined.

> *Recommendation 18, Information broker to policy makers.* UNEP should design its information services to governmental and business and industry decision makers primarily in the capacity of information broker; these services should facilitate access to existing quality information and format the information to respond to specific questions; these services should not be delivered primarily through hard-copy publications (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

27. UNEP has not yet developed a central capacity to be an information broker for governmental and business and industry decision makers. In 1994, UNEP took the decision to integrate all its headquarters information services in one information centre to develop a coordinated delivery of information. Through this integration, it was expected that a variety of users at the regional and national levels would have easier access to the kind of information they need. After review, however, UNEP management decided, in 1995, to continue using existing structures. It should be noted that priority tasks identified in the programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999 are still formulated around the specialized public and the scientific networks with which UNEP has long-established collaboration, rather than decision makers who may not have the technical training to allow them to use information from scientific, technical or statistical sources in the most productive manner (E/CN.17/1995/18, para. 18).

> *Recommendation 19, Public information material.* UNEP should provide public information material designed to be of direct use to journalists and media representatives following the same time-delivery standards and methods of drafting and presentation as news agencies (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

28. UNEP continued to provide public information material in different formats, targeting various users. However, most information products such as the magazine *Our Planet* or the films produced in collaboration with Television Trust for the Environment, cited by UNEP to the Central Evaluation Unit as evidence of implementation of recommendation 19, although valuable in their own right, are not central to the terms of this recommendation. The content of the material produced for the press by UNEP, such as press releases, is still in large part concerned with internal UNEP matters rather than covering newsworthy environmental issues and stories. A few isolated initiatives aimed at building partnerships with the media have been taken, but within no overall strategy. In 1997, UNEP developed a communication strategy facilitating the introduction of communication activities at all levels of programme planning and implementation.

C. Administration

1. Regional activities

> *Recommendation 20, Outposting of programmes to regional offices.* Headquarters units, such as the Environment and Economics and Freshwater Units, with limited staff resources and a programme of work requiring mostly frequent interactions with programmes outside UNEP, should be outposted to the location of the regional office where the most interactions occur. Programmes such as the biodiversity and dryland ecosystems and desertification control programmes, for which a large part of the data, experience and supporting institutions are available in a region, should be co-located with the UNEP office in the region (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

29. UNEP regional offices were strengthened by outposting of officers in such fields as environmental law, industry and natural resources, where needed, to enhance regional delivery and according to priorities set by the Ministers of the Environment in their specific geographical areas. The effectiveness of some regional offices was not easy to establish; the Governing Council has requested an evaluation of their operation (see para. 33 below). Furthermore, no significant progress is reported in respect of the main issue addressed by recommendation 20, which was to facilitate interactions between external organizations and the small units in UNEP that coordinate global programmes.

2. Support to major groups

> *Recommendation 21, Support to major groups.* UNEP should establish a strategy of collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other organizations representing major groups aimed at broader involvement of those groups in UNEP activities and a gradual increase of projects implemented by non-governmental organizations. A coordinator should be designated to follow up the

implementation of this strategy in all UNEP programmes (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

30. In 1995, the Governing Council, in its decision 18/4 of 26 May 1995,[2] noting this recommendation and the crucial partnership role identified for non-governmental organizations in Agenda 21, requested the Executive Director to develop a policy framework and appropriate mechanisms for working with non-governmental organizations, including the assigning of the function of coordinator to an existing senior position. In 1996, the inputs of non-governmental organizations gathered and analysed by the Environment Liaison Centre International were used to develop a policy framework for working with non-governmental organizations. The same year, building on its outreach programme, UNEP launched its Global Environmental Citizenship programme, located at the Mexico office. The programme established new partnerships with, among others, parliamentarians, religious groups and professional associations. From the information available to the Central Evaluation Unit, it is unclear how efficiently the programme is coordinated with other UNEP programmes involving non-governmental organizations.

3. Programme management

Recommendation 22, Fund-raising. UNEP should formulate an overall fund-raising strategy for environmental activities and establish a mechanism to implement it. The mechanism should include the provision of advice to all UNEP units as well as other organizations inside and outside the United Nations system on funding opportunities to complement and multiply the impact of the Environment Fund. UNEP should continue to facilitate the procurement of funding by endorsing those projects closely related to its programme of activities (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

31. UNEP has formulated a fund-raising strategy that was coordinated by a senior official. The Resource Mobilization Unit supported efforts to increase voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund and to complement the Fund by securing additional counterpart contributions and trust funds; however, the Clearing House for Technical Cooperation, which provided additional capacity for fund-raising, was discontinued owing to staff cuts. The results of the fund-raising strategy were mixed. According to figures reported in 1997, there was an absolute decline in the level of all categories of programme funding between 1994 and 1995, which continued into 1996, except for small amounts of counterpart – project-earmarked – contributions. The issue of stable, adequate and predictable financing of UNEP was identified in the Nairobi Declaration (see para. 7 above) as a matter of the highest priority. The success of future fund-raising will be dependent, as stated in paragraph 5 of the Nairobi Declaration, upon the Member States' "confidence in the organization" and the "excellence, relevance and cost-effectiveness in programme delivery".[3]

32. The UNEP strategy for resource mobilization for the Environment Fund in 1996-1997 stated that "competition in fund-raising in the environment field makes it imperative for UNEP to identify options and opportunities for improving fund-raising initiatives. The ultimate goal is to ensure full delivery of UNEP's programmes and, at the same time, to optimize the environmental impact of programmes of other United Nations agencies."[6] However, in recent years, the fund-raising efforts of UNEP have been concerned mostly with ensuring the implementation of its own programmes, and few funds could be used in a catalytic way to stimulate funding and activities elsewhere (see para. 9 above). Joint initiatives to raise funds to complement the Environment Fund were not discussed at the Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group or other coordinating forums. UNEP has discontinued funding to some ongoing programmes without adequate consultations with its partners or support to help them identify alternative sources of funds. Agencies commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that the lack of such a joint approach served to maintain, in a context of limited resources, a situation of competition for funds and duplication of initiatives with the donor community.

Recommendation 23, Office of Internal Oversight Services study of the effects of the reorganization of UNEP. Considering the substantial reorganization of UNEP that took place in 1993 and 1994, an independent study should be carried out by the Office of Internal Oversight Services by the end of 1996 to review the effects of this reorganization and assess the management situation in UNEP (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1).

33. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/51/810).[7] At its nineteenth session, the Governing Council, in its decision 19/29 B of 4 April 1997,[3] requested the Committee of Permanent Representatives, taking into account the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and of the Executive Director, on the management and administrative support of UNEP, to make specific recommendations to the Governing Council at its twentieth session as to how to make the secretariat more efficient, effective and transparent. The Council, in section III, paragraph 6, of its decision 19/22 of

7 February 1997,[3] requested the Executive Director, in consultation with the Office of Internal Oversight Services, to undertake, as a priority, an evaluation of the role, functions and management of all UNEP regional offices and to submit a report thereon in advance of its twentieth session.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

34. Broadly speaking, UNEP has implemented, or has made significant progress towards implementing, recommendations 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17 of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1995/3 and Corr.1). UNEP has not given adequate attention to key elements of the other recommendations, particularly in regard to (a) utilizing existing expertise within the United Nations system, (b) providing support to the implementation of environmental conventions and (c) improving access to information for the non-scientific community, including decision makers and the media.

Recommendation 1. Implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-fifth session on the evaluation of the programme on environment. UNEP should implement recommendations 1 to 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18 to 22, with due attention to the key elements highlighted in the present report. UNEP should report on this implementation to the Governing Council at its twentieth session.

Recommendation 2. Action on the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session. The present report, together with the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination thereon, should be submitted to the UNEP High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials for review and action. A report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination should be submitted to the Governing Council at its twentieth session.

(*Signed*) Karl Th. **Paschke**
Under-Secretary-General
for Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/50/16), para. 246.

[2] Ibid., *Supplement No. 25* (A/50/25), annex.

[3] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/52/25), annex, resolution 19/1, annex.

[4] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[5] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/52/25), annex.

[6] UNEP, Secretariat Policy Statement, 10 February 1996.

[7] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/52/16), paras. 311-315.